DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 579 TM 012 634

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TITLE Grade Three Testing Program, Fall 1987. 1986-87 Evaluation Report.
INSTITUTION Portland Public Schools, OR. Research and Evaluation Dept.
PUB DATE Jan 88
NOTE 42p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Tests; Answer Sheets; *Change Strategies; Educational Change; *Evaluation Methods; Grade 3; Needs Assessment; Primary Education; Surveys; *Teacher Attitudes; *Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Portland Basic Skills Achievement Levels Testing; Portland School District OR

ABSTRACT

Revised procedures of the Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) for grade 3 and teacher and test coordinator perceptions of the revised testing program are summarized. The revised program included changes in the PALT and locator test, the answer sheet, and practice test, and a new teacher's manual and wall charts. An evaluation collected information on the impact of the changes. Two surveys collected information from teachers (N=102), test coordinators (N=51), and teacher-test coordinators (N=11) on their opinions of revisions (this represented an 80% average response rate for the two surveys). Recommendations based on survey results included: (1) revision of the answer sheet; (2) development of a test coordinator manual; (3) establishing a Teacher Review Group for input on further revisions; (4) development of strategies and materials to help a teacher understand how the computer assigns test levels and how to review test levels; (5) development of a structured inservice training program for test coordinators; and (6) production of additional test preparation materials to help prepare students for testing. Appendices include the program surveys, a summary of frequency tables, and a summary of survey comments. (SLD)

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1986-87 EVALUATION REPORT

GRADE THREE TESTING PROGRAM FALL 1987

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Research and Evaluation Dept.
Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon
Walter E. Hathaway, Director

Stephanie Mitchell

January, 1988

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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION OF THE FALL 1987 GRADE THREE TESTING PROGRAM IN THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Portland Public Schools Department of Research, Evaluation and Testing modified the achievement testing program for grade three students in Fall 1987. This report describes the revised procedures of the grade three Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) and summarizes teacher and test coordinator perceptions of the testing program.

The revised Grade Three Testing Program included changes in the PALT and locator test, answer sheet, practice tests, and a new Teacher's Manual and wall charts for practice testing. The focus of the effort was to reduce handling of paper and save teacher time, develop efficiency and consistency in test procedures, implement earlier locator testing, provide better measurement, and continue to improve PALT goal information and tests.

The evaluation collected information on the impact of changes to the Fall 1987 PALT Grade Three Testing Program. Two surveys gathered information from teachers and test coordinators on how they viewed revisions in the testing program.

The Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Program was well received by teachers and test coordinators. They highly endorsed the following aspects of the Fall program: time frame, arrival of test supplies, new Practice Test Teacher's Manual, and the new Fall answer sheet. Findings suggest two aspects of the program which need fine tuning: assignment of test levels and the printing and delivery of PALT answer sheets to the schools.

Recommendations from the evaluation include:

1. The RE&T Department should consider revising the answer sheet to: a) arrange all bubbles in the same direction, b) put sample answer spaces directly above subject area to be tested (math sample responses above math test responses), and c) use consistent vocabulary on the answer sheet, Teacher's Manual, and test (mathematics vs. math).

2. The RE&T Department should develop a Test Coordinator's Manual. The manual might include: an overview of the Portland Achievement Levels Tests, answers to frequently asked testing program questions, a testing timetable, tips for helping teachers and parents interpret test scores, test preparation tips, and other testing resources.

3. The RE&T Department should consider establishing a Teacher Review Group. This group would offer input on revisions in the testing program, involve school-level users in providing training, and facilitate communication with teachers.

4. The RE&T Department should consider developing strategies or materials to help teachers gain a better understanding of how the computer assigns test levels and the teacher's professional role in reviewing the test level. If a teacher feels a student is placed in an inappropriate level, s/he should have procedural guides to resolve the situation.

5. The RE&T Department should develop a structured inservice training program for test coordinators. Training should be scheduled well in advance of Fall testing. Inservice might include: an orientation to the Portland Achievement Levels Tests, test preparation for students and teachers, graphing test results for use in instructional planning, classroom assessment, questions/answers on the role of the test coordinator, and interpretation and use of test information.

6. The RE&T Department should consider producing additional test preparation materials/kits to help teachers prepare students for testing. Strategies and support systems to encourage more teachers to use practice tests with students are needed. These might include: Teacher Manuals for Practice Tests 2-3, a glossary of testing terms, and student worksheets or materials to teach the vocabulary of testing.

EVALUATION OF THE
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM
IN THE
PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Report on Revisions in the Fall 1987 Program

Research, Evaluation and Testing Department
Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon

Stephanie Mitchell

January, 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY	i
INTRODUCTION	1
GRADE THREE TESTING IN PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1
Background and Rationale	1
Program Description	2
EVALUATION OF THE FALL 1987 GRADE THREE TESTING PROGRAM	3
METHODOLOGY	3
Measure	3
Subjects	3
Procedure	3
RESULTS	4
DISCUSSION	8
RECOMMENDATIONS	9
APPENDICES	
A. Grade 3 Testing Program Surveys	10
B. Summary of Frequency Tables	15
C. Summary of Survey Comments	23

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1.	Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Revisions	2
2.	Teacher Satisfaction with Practice Test 1	4
3.	Use of Practice Tests	4
4.	Use of Practice Test Teacher's Manual	5
5.	Use of Wall Charts	5
6.	Locator Answer Sheet Coding	5
7.	Fall 1987 Grade 3 Testing Program was an Improvement	6
8.	Satisfaction with Grade 3 Testing Program	6

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		
1.	Interest in Inservice Training	7
2.	Interest in Inservice Training By Role	7

EVALUATION OF THE FALL 1987 GRADE THREE TESTING PROGRAM IN THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Research, Evaluation, and Testing Department's commitment to improving achievement testing policy and practice in the Portland Public Schools, an evaluation of revisions in the Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Program was conducted. The purpose was to determine what procedures worked well and what fine tuning was needed in the Grade Three Testing Program.

This report describes the revised procedures of the grade three Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) and summarizes teacher and test coordinator perceptions of the program during Fall 1987.

The report is intended for use by the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Testing and Department staff as an aid in improving the structure and operation of the testing program and developing improved technical support for the schools. It is also expected to be of interest to school board members, district administrators, and researchers with an interest in achievement testing and its impact on educational practice.

GRADE THREE TESTING IN PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Background and Rationale

Achievement testing of young children is a complex process. Many factors other than a student's knowledge of the subject matter can influence his/her score. Comfort with the testing process, familiarity with answer sheet marking procedures, and student self-confidence are examples of these factors. Recognizing this fact, the Evaluation Department initiated a Task Force in 1985 to study PALT testing and make recommendations for improving the Grade Three Testing Program. Issues to be revised involved lessening the amount of clerical effort involved in processing tests and aligning the mathematics and language usage tests to more closely fit the curriculum. The following steps were taken:

1. Third grade teachers were surveyed in January 1986 to get suggestions for improvement in the testing program.

2. The 1986 survey results provided a basis for the design of appropriate revisions in grade three testing procedures.

3. A modified testing program was designed and discussed with a sample of third grade teachers.

Last year, the RE&T department conducted a telephone survey of third grade teachers to ask for input on improving the testing program. Teachers were chosen non-randomly by availability; 52% of third grade teachers (N=77) in 48 schools participated.

The 1986 survey results indicated that teachers wanted the Fall Grade Three Testing Program to be similar to Spring testing. A majority of teachers (84%) found student goal reports "moderately to highly useful in Fall planning." Over 70% found practice tests "moderately to highly useful in preparing students for PALT testing." When asked their preference in Fall testing format (standard vs. symbol-matching answer sheet), one-third of the teachers preferred the symbol-matching format, while 22% preferred the standard PALT answer sheet. A clear teacher preference was veiled by a third option; 43% of the teachers said they would like to use a consumable booklet for Fall Grade Three Testing. Costs prohibited pursuing this option.

The results of the 1986 survey set the direction for revisions in the Grade Three Testing Program. A modified program was designed during spring 1986, discussed with a sample of grade three teachers, announced to test coordinators and teachers in May 1987, and implemented in Fall 1987.

Program Description

Table 1 compares the past grade three program with the revised program. The new program includes revisions in the test, answer sheet format, administration and machine scoring of locator tests, a new Teacher's Manual, and Practice Test Wall Charts.

TABLE 1. Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Revisions

Old Program	New Program	Advantages/Disadv.
3 answer sheets	1 answer sheet	Less paper handling
Primary answer sheets with symbols	Standard answer sheet-improved	Consistency
Administer locator test 2nd-4th week	Administer locator test 2nd week	Earlier locator testing
Hand-scored locator	Machine-scored test	Save teacher time
15-item locator test	5 developmental test items added	Continued improvements in PALT test
36 items per test in primary PALT series	44-60 items/test in regular PALT series	Better measurement but longer test
Different test format fall and spring	Same test format fall and spring	Consistency
Primary goal reports	Goal report based on more items	Improved goal information

EVALUATION OF FALL 1987 GRADE THREE TESTING

The evaluation collected information on the following questions:

1. What procedures worked well in the revised Grade Three Testing Program and what fine tuning is needed?

2. How satisfied were teachers and test coordinators with the revisions in the Grade Three Testing Program?

3. What support materials or training should be developed to support the Grade Three Testing Program?

METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation Department conducted two surveys to assess the revisions in the Grade 3 Testing Program and determine what aspects should be modified to increase testing effectiveness.

Measure

In August 1987, two survey questionnaires were developed with the assistance of the RE&T departmental task force on grade three testing. The surveys measured third grade teachers' and test coordinators' use of and satisfaction with new PALT testing materials and procedures. The surveys (Appendix A) were conducted to assess satisfaction at two different phases of the testing cycle. The surveys were identical, except for one additional question concerning PALT testing on the second survey.

The Fall Grade Three Testing Program Surveys are 22-item questionnaires covering nine categories: time frame, supplies, practice tests, Teacher's Manual, wall chart, locator test, answer sheet, training, and overall satisfaction with testing.

Subjects

All grade three teachers and test coordinators participated in one of the two surveys on the impact of the revised testing program. Surveys were mailed to 206 participants. A response rate of 80% (N=164) was achieved; 102 grade 3 teachers, 51 test coordinators, and 11 grade 3 teacher/test coordinators . Ninety-five percent of the teachers had taught grade 3 in PPS before this year and were familiar with testing. In Survey 1, 91 surveys (84%) were returned; in Survey 2, 73 surveys (75%) were returned.

Procedure

Half of the teachers and test coordinators were surveyed in early October 1987, after locator testing. The other half of the group were surveyed in mid-November, after PALT testing and retesting. The two survey groups were selected randomly without replacement.

RESULTS

Testing Time Frame

Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they received adequate notice of revisions in the testing program. This response was slightly higher among test coordinators (93%) than among teachers (88%). No significant differences in responses to Survey 1 and 2 were observed.

Test Supplies/Packaging

Ninety-three percent of the group said they received enough test supplies. In Survey 1, fewer test coordinators (84%) reported receiving enough practice/locator supplies than teachers (95%).

Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported that they received test supplies on time. In Survey 1, 98% of teachers and 97% of coordinators received test materials on time. A decline in this area was seen in Survey 2; 88% of teachers and 77% of test coordinators reported receiving PALT retest materials on time.

Ninety-seven percent of teachers and test coordinators indicated that test supplies were adequately marked and complete. Teachers (83%) were less satisfied with the marking and completeness of test materials than test coordinators (93%).

Practice Tests

All third grade teachers were asked to use Practice Test 1. Overall, 91% of those surveyed said they used Practice Test 1. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated practice tests were useful to students. Test coordinators were more satisfied with the practice tests than teachers. Table 2 shows how teacher satisfaction with Practice Test 1 declined over time.

TABLE 2. Teacher Satisfaction with Practice Test 1

	Very High/High	Average	Low/Very Low
Survey 1	68%	18%	14%
Survey 2	53%	40%	7%

Practice tests 2 and 3 were optional tests to help prepare students for testing. Table 3 presents the percentage of use of Practice Tests 1, 2, and 3.

TABLE 3. Use of Practice Tests

	Prac. Test 1	Prac. Test 2	Prac. Test 3
Survey 1	92%	27%	22%
Survey 2	89%	40%	24%

Teacher's Manual

Table 4 summarizes the use of the Practice Test Teacher's Manual. Teachers and test coordinators found the manual a useful addition to the testing program. Several teachers suggested that Teacher Manuals for Practice Tests 2 and 3 would also be helpful.

TABLE 4. Use of Teacher's Manual

	Used Practice Test Teacher's Manual	Found Teacher's Manual Useful
Survey 1	86%	85%
Survey 2	82%	81%

Wall Charts

Wall charts showing students how to fill-in answer sheet bubbles were available to teachers in Fall 1987. The wall charts were used more frequently during practice testing than during locator or PALT testing. Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that the wall charts were useful in preparing students for testing. Several teachers suggested making the wall charts larger and laminating them for classroom use.

TABLE 5. Use of Wall Charts

	Practice Test	Locator Test	PALT Test
Survey 1	87%	59%	--
Survey 2	79%	62%	33%

Locator Answer Sheet Coding

Table 6 presents the number of locator answer sheets that were hand coded by teachers/test coordinators during Fall 1987. If hand coding was needed, 91% of Survey 1 respondents coded fewer than ten answer sheets, whereas 84% of Survey 2 respondents coded fewer than 20 answer sheets.

TABLE 6. Number of Hand Coded Locator Answer Sheets

	0	1-10	11-20	21-30
Survey 1	34%	57%	7%	2%
Survey 2	2%	29%	53%	16%

An alternative was having the Test Center handcode answer sheets. Sixty-five teachers (42%) took advantage of this option; this was no problem during locator testing, but was a concern as it extended into PALT testing. When asked if returning locator answer sheets early was a problem, 68% said it was not a problem.

Answer Sheet Format

A large majority of those surveyed approved of the new answer sheet; 85% indicated that the standard answer sheet was an improvement over the previous symbol matching answer sheet. Ninety-four percent of respondents felt that more space between the bubbles on the answer sheet was an improvement. Ninety-one percent of those surveyed felt that having reading, math, and language on one side of the answer sheet and student i.d. information on the other side was an improvement. No differences in response patterns were observed between Survey 1 and 2.

Interest in Inservice Training

Figure 1 displays the percentage of respondents interested in inservice training in the interpretation and use of test scores. Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed expressed an interest in learning more about test scores. Survey 1 respondents were more favorably inclined toward testing inservice; the timing of the survey may be a factor in this response.

Figure 2 presents the percentage interested in training by role. This graph displays the distribution of the 28% of those surveyed interested in inservice training. More grade three teachers (63%) than test coordinators (37%) are interested in inservice training in testing; experience in testing may be a factor here.

Improvement and Satisfaction with the Testing Program

Table 7 presents the percentage of respondents viewing the Fall Grade Three Testing Program as an improvement over past years. More test coordinators than teachers saw the program as improved. In Survey 1, 97% of test coordinators and 90% of teachers viewed the program was improved. In Survey 2, 95% of test coordinators, but only 69% of teachers reported the program was an improvement.

TABLE 7. Fall 1987 Grade 3 Testing Program was an Improvement

	YES	NO
Survey 1	92%	8%
Survey 2	76%	24%

Table 8 summarizes the decline in satisfaction with the Grade Three Testing Program between the first and second survey.

TABLE 8. Satisfaction with Fall 1987 Grade 3 Testing Program

	Very High/High	Average	Low/Very Low
Survey 1	64%	25%	11%
Survey 2	41%	35%	24%

Figure 1.
Interest in Inservice Training

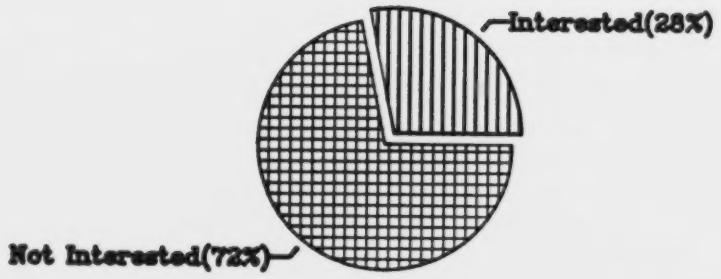
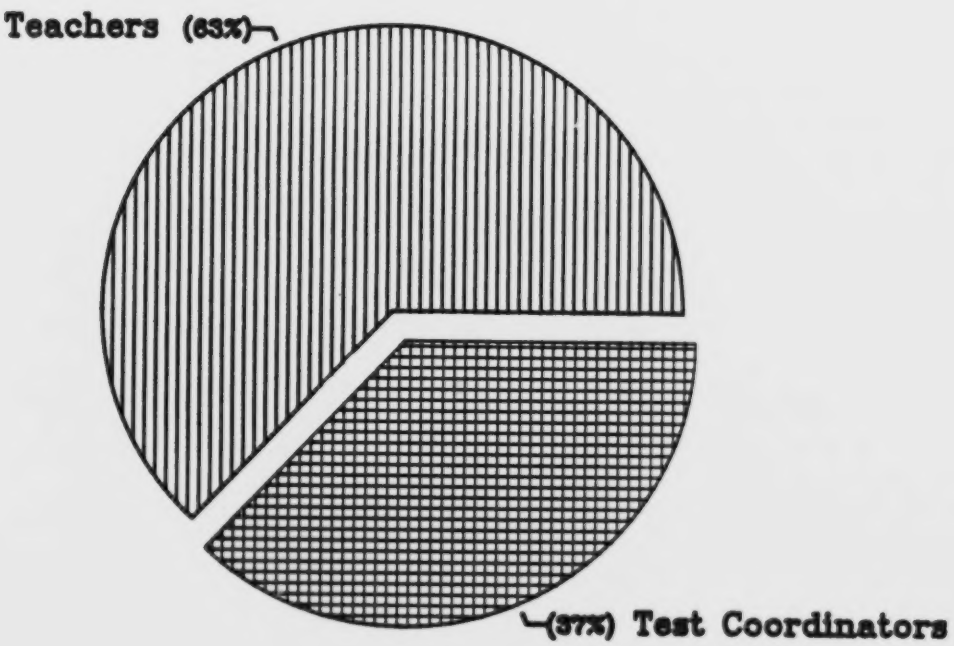


Figure 2.
Interest in Inservice By Role



DISCUSSION

This investigation of the Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Program attempted to find evidence to answer questions, such as: how should the Grade Three Testing Program best support the needs of teachers; what test procedures/materials work best with grade three students; and what aspects of the program should be modified to increase the effectiveness of testing?

The revised Grade Three Testing Program was well received by test coordinators and teachers. They highly endorsed the following aspects of the program: time frame, arrival of test supplies, Practice Test Teacher's Manual, and the standard answer sheet.

Findings suggest two aspects of the program which need revision: the assignment of test levels and the delivery of PALT answer sheets to schools. Many teachers identified problems with level assignments being too high and not receiving test materials with adequate lead time for PALT testing in Survey 2. Errors in test level assignment increased student retests. Factors involved in the different responses between Survey 1&2 relate to the time in the testing cycle. Survey 1 assessed pre-PALT activity; Survey 2 assessed pre-PALT, PALT and retesting activity. These issues should be confronted by RE&T Department and Test Coordinators.

Another issue of concern is practice testing. Teachers used Practice Test 1 because the RE&T Department asked them to use it. But given the choice of using additional Practice Tests 2-3, 60-75% of the teachers did not use them, yet they report that practice tests are useful to students. One reason for this may be the time lapse between practice testing in September and PALT testing in late October. A Teacher Review Group might offer suggestions for modifying practice tests to make them more useful to teachers. This group could also develop methods to encourage more teachers to use Practice Tests 2 and 3.

Test coordinator survey responses were split on the issue of early return of locator answer sheets in the Fall 1987 program. Fifty-three percent said time was no problem; 47% said the timing was difficult for them. Logistical and time management support should be made available to assist these test coordinators.

Teachers had important suggestions for improvement in the answer sheet format. The current answer sheet has both horizontal and vertical columns of bubbles on the student identification side of the form. A consistent pattern is preferable for young children.

The findings confirmed the need to provide training for teachers and test coordinators in testing. Interestingly, more teachers (63%) than test coordinators (37%) are interested in training on the use of test scores. Test coordinators may feel they have already been involved in previous training by the department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the evaluation of the Fall 1987 Grade Three Testing Program suggest the following recommendations:

1. The RE&T Department should consider revising the answer sheet to: a) arrange all bubbles in the same direction, b) put sample answer spaces directly above subject area to be tested (math sample responses above math test responses), and c) use consistent vocabulary on the answer sheet, Teacher's Manual, and test (mathematics vs. math).

2. The RE&T Department should develop a Test Coordinator's Manual. The manual might include: an overview of the Portland Achievement Levels Tests, answers to frequently asked testing program questions, a testing timetable, tips for helping teachers and parents interpret test scores, test preparation tips, and other testing resources.

3. The RE&T Department should consider establishing a Teacher Review Group. This group would offer input on revisions in the testing program, involve school-level users in providing training, and facilitate communication with teachers.

4. The RE&T Department should consider developing strategies or materials to help teachers gain a better understanding of how the computer assigns test levels and the teacher's professional role in reviewing the test level. If a teacher feels a student is placed in an inappropriate level, s/he should have procedural guides to resolve the situation.

5. The RE&T Department should develop a structured inservice training program for test coordinators. Training should be scheduled well in advance of Fall testing. Inservice might include: an orientation to the Portland Achievement Levels Tests, test preparation for students and teachers, graphing test results for use in instructional planning, classroom assessment, questions/answers on the role of the test coordinator, and interpretation and use of test information.

6. The RE&T Department should consider producing additional test preparation materials/kits to help teachers prepare students for testing. Strategies and support systems to encourage more teachers to use practice tests with students are needed. These might include: Teacher Manuals for Practice Tests 2-3, a glossary of testing terms, and student worksheets or materials to teach the vocabulary of testing.

APPENDIX A

- Grade 3 Testing Program Surveys

PORTLAND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS TEST - GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

SURVEY 1 - Fall 1987

The Evaluation Department asks your help in assessing revisions in the Fall 1987 Grade 3 P.A.L.T. testing program. The purpose of the survey is to find out what procedures worked well and what fine tuning is needed.

Please complete the survey and return it to Stephanie Mitchell, Evaluation Department, BESC by October 16, 1987. If you have questions, please contact Stephanie at extension 238. Thank you.

SECTION A. Please circle 1 yes/no and 1 scale response (1=low and 5=high).

	YES/NO RESPONSE		HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THIS?				
	Yes	No	Low		Med		High
1. TESTING TIME FRAME							
Did you have adequate notice of the revisions in the Fall 1987 Grade 3 PALT testing program?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
2. TEST SUPPLIES/PACKAGING							
a. Did you get enough test supplies?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did the test supplies arrive on time?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Were supplies adequately marked and complete?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
3. PRACTICE TESTS							
a. Did you use Practice Test 1?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did you use the optional Practice Test 2?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Did you use the optional Practice Test 3?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
d. Were the practice tests useful to students?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
4. PRACTICE TEST - TEACHER'S MANUAL							
a. Did you use the Practice Test Teacher Manual?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Was the Practice Test Manual useful to you?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
5. TESTING WALL CHARTS							
a. Did you use wall charts during practice testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did you use wall charts during locator testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Were the wall charts useful in preparing students for testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
6. LOCATOR TEST ANSWER SHEETS							
a. How many locator answer sheets did YOU hand code? 0___ 1-10___ 11-20___ 21-30___ Other: (how many)___			1	2	3	4	5
b. Did the TEST CENTER help hand code your locator test answer sheets?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Was time a problem in returning the locator answer sheets to the Test Center by late Sept?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5

	YES/NO RESPONSE		HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THIS?				
	Yes	No	Low		Med		High
7. ANSWER SHEETS							
a. Is using one standard answer sheet an improvement over the 3 previous symbol matching answer sheets?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Is more space between the bubbles on the answer sheet an improvement?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Is having reading, math, and language on one side of the answer sheet and student information on the other an improvement?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
8. OVERALL SATISFACTION							
Overall, was the Fall 1987 Grade 3 testing program an improvement over past years?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
9. INSERVICE TRAINING							
Are you interested in receiving inservice training in how to interpret and use PALT test scores?	Y	N					

10. What problems, if any, did you experience with the revised practice and locator test procedures of the Fall Grade 3 testing program this year?

_____

_____

11. Additional comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION B. PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. CHECK ONE.

1. School: K-5 ____ K-8 ____ K/1-3____

2. Role: Grade 3 Teacher ____ Test Coordinator ____ Grade 3 Teacher & Test Coord.____

3. Have you taught Grade 3 in PPS before this year? Yes____ No____

Please check that you marked one response for each item. Return to S. Mitchell, Evaluation, by 10/16/87. Thanks.

PORTLAND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS TEST - GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

SURVEY 2 - Fall 1987

The Evaluation Department asks your help in assessing revisions in the Fall 1987 Grade 3 P.A.L.T. testing program. The purpose of the survey is to find out what procedures worked well and what fine tuning is needed.

Please complete the survey and return it to Stephanie Mitchell, Evaluation Department, BESC by November 23, 1987. If you have questions, please contact Stephanie at extension 238. Thank you.

SECTION A. Please circle 1 yes/no and 1 scale response (1=low and 5=high).

	YES/NO RESPONSE		HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THIS?				
	Yes	No	Low		Med		High
1. TESTING TIME FRAME							
Did you have adequate notice of the revisions in the Fall 1987 Grade 3 PALT testing program?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
2. TEST SUPPLIES/PACKAGING							
a. Did you get enough test supplies?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did the test supplies arrive on time?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Were supplies adequately marked and complete?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
3. PRACTICE TESTS							
a. Did you use Practice Test 1?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did you use the optional Practice Test 2?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Did you use the optional Practice Test 3?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
d. Were the practice tests useful to students?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
4. PRACTICE TEST - TEACHER'S MANUAL							
a. Did you use the Practice Test Teacher Manual?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Was the Practice Test Manual useful to you?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
5. TESTING WALL CHARTS							
a. Did you use wall charts during practice testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Did you use wall charts during locator testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Did you use wall charts during PALT testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
d. Were the wall charts useful in preparing students for testing?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
6. LOCATOR TEST ANSWER SHEETS							
a. How many locater answer sheets did YOU hand code? 0___ 1-10___ 11-20___ 21-30___ Other: (how many)___			1	2	3	4	5
b. Did the TEST CENTER help hand code your locator test answer sheets?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Was time a problem in returning the locator answer sheets to the Test Center in late Sept?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5

	YES/NO RESPONSE		HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THIS?				
	Yes	No	Low		Med		High
7. ANSWER SHEETS							
a. Is using one standard answer sheet an improvement over the 3 previous symbol matching answer sheets?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
b. Is more space between the bubbles on the answer sheet an improvement?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
c. Is having reading, math, and language on one side of the answer sheet and student information on the other an improvement?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
8. OVERALL SATISFACTION Overall, was the Fall 1987 Grade 3 testing program an improvement over past years?	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
9. INSERVICE TRAINING Are you interested in receiving inservice training in how to interpret and use PALT test scores?	Y	N					

10. What problems, if any, did you experience with the revised practice and locator test procedures of the Fall Grade 3 testing program this year?

_____

_____

11. Additional comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION B. PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. CHECK ONE.

1. School: K-5 ____ K-8 ____ K/1-3____

2. Role: Grade 3 Teacher ____ Test Coordinator ____ Grade 3 Teacher & Test Coord.____

3. Have you taught Grade 3 in PPS before this year? Yes____ No____

Please check that you marked one response for each item. Return to S. Mitchell, Evaluation, by 11/23/87. Thanks.

APPENDIX B

o Summary of Frequency Tables

Question 1
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Received Adequate Notice of Test Revisions	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	83	91.2	8	8.8	91
Survey 2	63	87.5	9	12.5	72
Total	146	89.6	17	10.4	163

Question 2a
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Received Enough Test Supplies	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	83	91.2	8	8.8	91
Survey 2	69	94.5	4	5.5	73
Total	152	92.7	12	7.3	164

Question 2b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Received Test Supplies on Time	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	87	97.8	2	2.2	89
Survey 2	61	84.7	11	15.3	72
Total	148	91.9	13	8.1	161

Question 2c
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Test Supplies Marked & Complete	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	89	98.9	1	1.1	90
Survey 2	66	94.3	4	5.7	70
Total	155	96.9	5	3.1	160

Question 3a
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Practice Test 1	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	80	92.0	7	8.0	87
Survey 2	64	88.9	8	11.1	72
Total	144	90.6	15	9.4	159

Question 3b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Optional Practice Test 2	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	24	28.6	60	71.4	84
Survey 2	28	40.0	42	60.0	70
Total	52	33.8	102	66.2	154

Question 3c
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Optional Practice Test 3	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	20	23.8	64	76.2	84
Survey 2	16	23.9	51	76.1	67
Total	36	23.8	115	76.2	151

Question 3d
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Practice Test was Useful to Stdts.	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	71	89.9	8	10.1	79
Survey 2	60	90.9	6	9.1	66
Total	131	90.3	14	9.7	145

Question 4a
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Practice Test Teacher's Manual	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	74	86.0	12	14.0	86
Survey 2	59	81.9	13	18.1	72
Total	133	84.2	25	15.8	158

Question 4b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Found Teacher Manual Useful	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	69	85.2	12	14.8	81
Survey 2	55	80.9	13	19.1	68
Total	124	83.2	25	16.8	149

Question 5a
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Wall Charts in Practice Testing	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	74	87.1	11	12.9	85
Survey 2	56	78.9	15	21.1	71
Total	130	83.3	26	16.7	156

Question 5b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Wall Charts in Locator Testing	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	51	59.3	35	40.7	86
Survey 2	43	62.3	26	37.7	69
Total	94	60.6	61	39.4	155

Question 5c
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Used Wall Charts During PALT Test	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	Item was not asked in survey 1.				
Survey 2	23	32.9	47	67.1	70
Total	23	32.9	47	67.1	70

Question 5d
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Wall Charts Useful In Preparing Stdts.	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	75	91.5	7	8.5	82
Survey 2	61	91.0	6	9.0	67
Total	136	91.3	13	8.7	149

Question 6b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Test Center Hand Coded Answer Sheet	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	35	40.7	51	59.3	86
Survey 2	31	43.7	40	56.3	71
Total	66	42.0	91	58.0	157

Question 6c
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Time was a Problem in Returning Answer Sheets	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	29	33.3	58	66.7	87
Survey 2	22	30.6	50	69.4	72
Total	51	32.1	108	67.9	159

Question 8
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Was Fall 87 Testing an Improvement	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	78	91.8	7	8.2	85
Survey 2	48	76.2	15	23.8	63
Total	126	85.1	22	14.9	148

Question 9
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Interested in PALT Inservice Training	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	28	31.1	62	68.9	90
Survey 2	18	25.4	53	74.6	71
Total	46	28.6	115	71.4	161

Question 7a
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Prefer Standard Answer Sheet	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	75	85.2	13	14.8	88
Survey 2	62	84.9	11	15.1	73
Total	137	85.1	24	14.9	161

Question 7b
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Prefer New Answer Sheet w/more space	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	77	93.9	5	6.1	82
Survey 2	67	94.4	4	5.6	71
Total	144	94.1	9	5.9	153

Question 7c
GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

Prefer R-M-L Separate from Student Info.	YES N	YES %	NO N	NO %	TOTAL N
Survey 1	80	92.0	7	8.0	87
Survey 2	66	91.7	6	8.3	72
Total	146	91.8	13	8.2	159

APPENDIX C

- Summary Comments - Survey 1
- Summary Comments - Survey 2

SURVEY 1 - SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES
FALL 1987 GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, DID YOU EXPERIENCE WITH THE REVISED PRACTICE AND LOCATOR TEST PROCEDURES OF THE FALL GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM?

Positive Comments

None - 18 responses

Tests were better than in the past.

I thought the test was very well written. This is my first year administering the test and I didn't have any problems. Thanks for a great job of writing it. Good job!

A 100% improvement over previous testing procedures.

This is much improved over the old way!

Standard answer sheets are so much better! Thanks!

Much better. Only problem is that we have quite a few new to Portland students with no student ID#.

As a whole, the new procedures are a great start. Once teachers get use to the new tests, they should prove to be much superior.

Great revisions in the practice and locators! They prepare students for fall and spring testing much better.

General comments

The children were very frustrated; every subject was way too difficult for my students. Kids were crying, giving up, refusing to answer, or just marking anything at all.

As a district we should look at research, share ideas and explore the value of fall testing for third graders. What do teachers see in these tests?

I would like to see the tests administered by testing experts, like we used to do. Costs may prove the problem.

Tests should be given by Oct. 1; Spring tests after May 15. Let's test students on 9 months growth, not just 7.

I disagree with fall grade 3 testing, the students are too young. Test skills are not appropriate for students just completing grade 2 after a summer's regression.

An extra meeting in my busy schedule.

The Test Coordinator was the problem in our school. No other problems beyond just working with 8 year olds.

I feel there should be no fall testing in grade 3. I understand the need for early testing, but it's a major disruption in setting up routines and programs for students.

I don't feel PALT tests give enough information. I prefer using standardized testing that better measures student's skills. I am very unhappy with PALT.

Practice testing, then locators, then PALT, is too much. Go back to standardized tests.

Hand coding took time and so did calling for ID#'s.

Locator Test

The locator test should be optional and only given to students who are at grade level.

The locator test was very difficult and frustrating for the majority of third grade.

The new format was OK, but overall too hard for the kids.

Locator questions, especially math, were too hard.

The tests were too long when you include practice tests and locator tests. They could be simplified.

Locator is too hard; third grade is too young for this kind of test. My class was frustrated, crying and took hours to finish. Spend a few weeks in a classroom yourself and enter the real world. Come administer these tests yourself!

We did not receive the practice test. The testing procedure was very difficult for the students.

I was extremely concerned that the material was entirely too difficult, as were my students. They were very discouraged!

The locator tests were too difficult for a majority of students. I had to stop locator testing after an hour or so. Many kids were not finished. I shudder to think how they will react to the PALT. In my 19 years of teaching and testing, I have never encountered this before.

Locator questions seemed hard for beginning grade 3, but perhaps it will give an accurate test placement.

Entire testing process is exhausting and demoralizing for beginning third graders. Are locator tests necessary?

It would be helpful, if level assignment lists could be sent earlier to allow more time to administer locators to 4th/5th students not listed. Just today-Oct 13, I received these materials which allows minimal time to level these children.

Hours wasted by teachers and school secretary to get new student ID numbers. Test too long. I could have scored all third grade building locator tests in the two hours it took to check the answer sheet bubbles and for stray marks. Shorten the test and return to hand scoring, its faster.

Vocabulary on the test/Directions

The practice test example on page 1 and the directions for the teacher to read to students were very confusing. Students don't understand the testing vocabulary.

Although I like the new locator tests, the vocabulary needs revision; too many difficult words, i.e., "capitalization", "punctuation", etc.

Test vocabulary is too difficult for beginning grade 3.

Test vocabulary needs to match with new adoptions. Without constant teacher input, kids don't understand the terms. Get the new textbooks and let us teach the concepts/terms needed. There is not enough time in a school day to teach both. ERC students just guess at some questions if they wouldn't read and their locators are not going to be valid.

Format of the test

The print is too small for third graders to handle.

The mechanics of the tests were very difficult for a large number of third grade students.

The printing on the locator and practice tests is too small and there was some blurred print. Students were confused about where to mark on the answer sheet by the sample spaces and the extra bubbles in reading, language and math.

The math test booklet needs dark lines drawn between problems, like in reading and language. Students couldn't follow in areas when the format configuration changed. The partitions between the locator tests confused students.

Math test items were numbered unsequentially, 1-3-2-4; children went across the page.

Math, Language and Reading tests were in a different order on the practice and locator tests. Student test said "mathematics"; answer sheet said "math".

Time of the locator test

Timing the locator test so early in the year was difficult; too much valuable instructional time was wasted the second week of school. This was very unsettling to children.

I suggest you allow 45 minutes for locator testing.

Time was too short to get student ID numbers. Testing takes more instructional time than in the past.

I need time to prepare students for "failing" the test. It would help to do 3 practice tests, if we had more time.

Locator and practice tests take too much time. Some students still have difficulty with filling in bubbles.

Children need more time to complete locator (45-60 minutes).

Locator testing was very early this year. I would like to have at least 1 month with children before starting testing. Locator testing was too early; children have a lot of trouble following directions the second week of school.

The test was administered too early in school year. I could have used more advance notice or time for planning.

Time to get ID numbers is a big problem. If we don't have ID numbers, we should be allowed to get them coded at BESC.

It was difficult to manage all this with a grade 2/3 split class and nowhere to put the second graders. It took me six different times to do 3 practice and 3 locators.

I feel that students lose efficiency after 1-2 hours of testing. Could testing be spread over a period of days?

Third graders could not finish tests in the prescribed time.

Answer sheet

The order of the tests on the answer sheets should be Reading, Language, and then Math.

The sample boxes are too hard. Kids get setup with test booklet and answer sheet and then need to flip it over to do the sample questions; arrange the answer sheet sequentially.

Too many students had trouble finding the correct spot. I think 3 answer sheets in fall would be better.

It was difficult for students to find sample answer boxes. Students could not locate where to mark answers for each test. The extra numbers on answer sheets were confusing.

Answer sheet space was too tight and caused confusion with students circling in the wrong sections.

The samples on the answer sheet were a problem.

Having all three tests on one answer sheet was confusing to the students. They marked answers under the wrong category, even when shown where to mark. Too easy to lose place.

The bubbles are good for consistency, but the additional spaces worried the kids that this was a really long test.

There was lots of frustration by my students. Locating the correct place on the answer sheet was difficult for them.

Have answer sheets with less numbered bubbles on it; you didn't need 60 bubbles when the test has 20-30 questions.

The mix-up with original answer sheets was a big problem. Even after revision, students were placed too high.

Put test level on the answer side of the answer sheet, so we can double check students are working on the correct test.

On the 1st and 2nd locator tests, the class had difficulty finding the sample questions and the place to start. Six tests take a lot of time to organize/administer.

Is there a way to make answer sheets easier for 8 yr old physical and mental development? It is difficult for children not to be threatened by such a format. The directions/vocabulary was far too advanced for our students. They were frustrated and turned off to the testing program. I'm concerned they'll be afraid to test in October.

I suggest reducing the number of questions to answer; with larger bubbles (20 for test) you could put 3 subjects on one sheet. Sample problems are confusing. I like the test being similar at all grades, but grade 3 kids find it difficult to mark and not get off track. Kids should not be told to skip difficult questions. You are on the right track. Keep working on it!

Revise the answer sheet so sample answers are above the subject (math sample questions above math questions). Turning the answer sheet over to start is difficult.

Most students would skip one number on the answer sheet accidentally, even after reminded, and be one off at the end of the test. This frustrated many students.

Put a black line between the subjects, instead of green.

Standard answer sheet

Standard answer sheets are so much better! Thanks!

Symbol matching answer sheet

The answer sheets are difficult. This is a college level answer sheet, not third grade. Wise up, go back to symbols.

Students had difficulty locating the correct place from test booklet to answer sheet. The old symbols seemed to help.

The old symbols on locator answer sheet were better. The kids made errors by filling in the wrong bubbles! When will you people find out what third grade kids are like?

Many beginning third grade students do not have the hand-eye coordination to accurately work the "new" answer sheet. Symbol sheets were superior.

Wall Charts

Print the wall charts on heavier paper; they leak through when a felt pen is used. The printing was distorted and too small on the math locator. Three kids asked me what "as" said; they thought it said "88".

I'd like more wall charts; one looks messy after a while.

Teacher's Manual

Good job thinking out details. I don't like test administration manual; it left out important clues/steps.

Practice Tests

I would like to express the importance of practice testing for third graders. We have established some pretesting activities to help ease the students nerves. Also, we provide nutritious snacks during the practice tests; this allows children to have an energy boost, plus a release of any feelings of anxiety.

The practice test was great.

The practice tests were easy.

Practice test questions were fine.

I suggest second graders take a practice test in the spring. The whole process needs more time; practice tests should be given at least 2 weeks before the locator tests.

SURVEY 2 - SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES
FALL 1987 GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM

WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, DID YOU EXPERIENCE WITH THE REVISED PRACTICE AND LOCATOR TEST PROCEDURES OF THE FALL GRADE 3 TESTING PROGRAM?

Positive comments

None - 4 responses

My testing went smoothly. Dr. Johnson had everything well planned and organized.

The tests were greatly improved.

Actually it was just as easy for third graders this year.

I think the Testing Department is really doing well. You are always trying to improve.

New answer sheets are good. Teachers thought the practice tests and materials were helpful. Teachers liked the previous symbol form, but the standard is an improvement.

General comments

There were too many test packages. Too much testing material to sort out and keep track of in the school.

The children tired easily. They were drained and exhausted.

Many parents talk to me about testing; their children were nervous, scared and anxious during test week. Do we really have to test 8 year olds?

My difficulties were with the test. Many of my third graders took Reading-Level 5 and it took them 1½ hours. They had very long passages which were tough for even the skilled students.

Testing once a year should be sufficient. The tests should cover what has been learned in the class.

I think that Fall grade 3 testing could be eliminated; testing them once in the Spring would be sufficient.

Are there any plans to start PALT testing in the fourth grade, rather than the third?

There's no need to wait until late October for PALT testing. I see no need to do spring testing so early either.

This was the most difficult test I have ever given. I felt, due to the complications, the tests should be INVALIDATED!

I appreciate the revisions; however, I don't feel that PALT test scores indicate all qualities about students and test scores are often inaccurate because of health or misunderstandings about "how to take" tests.

Why not use a proven test, such as ITBS. I think the PALT testing program stinks! My students were placed in tests too difficult for their level!!

Most of my students still found the test very difficult. There was not the discrepancy between the locator (easy) and actual testing (very difficult) as in the past years.

The math test is too difficult at all levels. Write test items which ease students into more difficult math questions. Use some completion problems to avoid the immediate frustration of multiple choice items. The children need to feel success.

Locator/level placement

Some students were placed in the wrong test level.

Twenty questions on each locator test is not enough to accurately locate the student's test level.

Testing levels appeared to be inaccurate.

Level placement was too high for kids. I see no need for practice tests, locators, PALT, retests. Too much testing. The test levels seemed too high for most students.

Locator test levels assigned were too high. There was a misplacement of eight of my students, but the error was admitted and corrected.

The locator tests placed many students on too high a level.

There was a problem with inaccurate test level placement.

It turns out that locator test information was used incorrectly by BESC. As a result too many students were incorrectly placed in test levels.

Locators place students too high. Too many retests.

Teachers thought assigned PALT test levels were very difficult for many third graders.

I'm concerned about the too high level placement of students.

Math locator tests placed students too high; the locators were not accurate.

The locator tests were administered too early. The 2nd week of school is much too soon. Some ID#'s are not available on new students. Students were placed in levels too high.

I feel there's something wrong with the Locator Test since they put the majority of the third graders in Reading-level 2, Language-level 21, and Math-level 14. My children felt very frustrated. Two cried because they couldn't understand math problems on page one of the test. At the level these children were placed, they will be in the top level by fourth grade. I'm sorry to say that most of the students do not have a positive attitude about testing anymore.

I would like the option of changing a child's PALT level, as indicated by the locator if the level seems inappropriate in the teacher's judgement.

The teacher should fill-in the student's test level rather than having pre-printed levels. A level can be suggested, but the teacher should determine it. Extra days for testing this year really helped; the old schedule was too tight.

A teacher should be able to change a student's test level if the locator test placed the student at a higher level than he/she should be tested. Even the corrected levels were high. The sheets not arriving on time caused an inconvenience.

There should be an easy way for teachers to change a level when a mistake is obvious. Answer sheets came late and I had no blanks. I had 3 very good students who were assigned the lowest math level. They were retested as I knew would happen.

Locator testing should fit our schedule, not just yours!

I gave most students test levels that were too high. I had to lower many students test levels.

It frustrated me and my class that the students were placed at such high levels on the tests.

I liked not having to hand score tests, but missed being able to add teachers judgement to test scores for placement.
Many of my students were misplaced either too low or high.

The locator test was too hard for my students.

Many students were placed in tests they couldn't do. I had several students in tears from frustration. Even the locator tests were overwhelming for them.

Retests

We had too many retests of students this year.

My school had a higher number of grade 3 retests. I could have used additional day to retest, due to the Nov. holiday.

I had way too many third grade retests!

It was confusing and time consuming to retake PALT tests. Practically my whole class was involved! Print the test level on the answer side of the sheet to reduce student error.

The inaccuracy in results of locator tests resulted in quite a few third graders needing to be retested.

Vocabulary of the test

Math test uses terms foreign to "Math their Way" program.

Time of the locator test

Obviously, the notes on mis-assigned levels were damaging. Overall, there is not enough prep time for fall testing.

Locator tests placed our students in incorrect test levels. Teacher judgement works just as well as the locator test.

Time needed for students to complete the test was too long.

Locator test arrived in our school too late. We only had 1½ days to do 3 tests. There was no time for practice tests.

The time squeeze is a problem. Schools need more time between receiving information from the testing department and the expected timeline for returning materials.

It was a problem that there were no ID numbers on new students. I spent lots of time phoning to get ID numbers.

Testing is long, laborious and invaluable. Testing this early in the school year seems unwise; classes are being formed & regrouped. Children are not "settled" and there was not much time to get their brain back in gear after three months off.

I received the locator scores very late.

Answer sheets

The biggest problem was the number of PALT answer sheets that needed hand coding. Many students were included that were not in our school this fall. Some answer sheets had the wrong test level placement of students.

Grade 3 testing came so early this year. Printout information was inaccurate. Needed more blank answer sheets for PALT test.

I needed more answer sheets without student names coded.

Many changes in the testing program were problematic. Delivery of answer sheets was not soon enough. Also, delivery of retest information did not come until November 9th. I would like to be ready to retest on November 9th. Sample item boxes were hard for students to find.

Answers to sample questions should be the same in all level books; in some books, the answer was A and in others C. It's confusing for the answers to be different and this is difficult to check before starting the test.

Students discovered their problem and answer number were not the same; it was impossible to discover where they got lost.

The answer sheet is still overwhelming for third graders. Students lost their place and became confused.

It was too hard for students to understand what they were to do on the answer sheets.

Parts of the locator answer sheet are vertical, other parts are horizontal. This creates problems in marking the sheet.

Symbol matching answer sheet

The practice and locator tests "seemed" a good idea, in reality, there was still confusion over their place on the answer sheet. The symbol answer sheet worked better.

In administering retests, I ran into these problems:
1. Students turned two pages in the test booklet
2. Students marked in the wrong areas on the answer sheet
3. Students got "lost" on the answer sheet

Even with close supervision, students experienced problems. I decided the symbol answer sheets were better.

<u>Teacher's Manual</u>

Teacher Manual said sample boxes were on the front, in fact, they were on the back side of the answer sheet.

The teacher manual did not correlate with the test booklet.

Written directions didn't match the student's answer sheet.

The teacher manual is outdated and needs to be revised.

The directions in the Teacher Manual didn't match the way the answer sheet was set up. This was a problem. I think a <u>Sample Test Answer Chart</u> would be very helpful.

The test code was on the back side so I could not check to see if the student was on the right test. Three or four students started in the wrong column on each test.

Teacher's Manual said sample items were in the bottom right corner, actually they were at the top of the answer sheet.

The PALT student test booklet and teacher's booklet were not the same. The test booklet did not go with the test.

Mistakes and lack of coordination between the test booklet and the examiner's manual made testing difficult. The tests are too long for third grade students.

Directions in test manual need revision to match the tests. The testing manual did not match the test.

Practice tests

My students needed more questions on the practice test.

The optional practice test was not necessary, but we were encouraged to give it.

A few practice test questions should require more thought to simulate a real test. Practice tests are a part of progress.